

Message Text

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64

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 SS-15 NSC-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 AID-05

SAB-01 /058 W

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R 131517Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6549

INFO AMEMBASSY PANAMA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 0250

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CI

SUBJECT: VISIT OF VFW COMMANDER THOMAS WALKER

REF: STATE 301382

1. HIGHLIGHT OF VISIT OF VFW COMMANDER WALKER, ACCOMPANIED BY COL. MARLOW, TO SANTIAGO JANUARY 11-13 WAS INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT PINOCHET JANUARY 12. WALKER ALSO MET WITH DEFENSE MINISTER GEN. BRADY, WHO HOSTED A DINNER FOR HIM. AMBASSADOR GAVE LUNCHEON IN WALKER'S HONOR, ATTENDED BY THREE KEY CABINET MINISTERS AND OTHER CHILEAN DIGNITARIES.

2. AFTER AMENITIES AND PLEASANTRIES, COMMANDER WALKER TOLD PINOCHET THAT HE WAS MAKING THIS TRIP TO LATIN AMERICA BECAUSE TOO LITTLE ATTENTION HAD BEEN PAID BY THE VFW TO OUR FRIENDS IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD. WALKER WAS ON THIS TRIP TO LEARN MORE ABOUT LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES, SO THAT THE VFW COULD GIVE MORE APPROPRIATE CONSIDERATION TO REGIONAL PROBLEMS.

3. PRESIDNET PINOCHET EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR WALKER'S VISIT. STATED CHILE SOUGHT BETTER UNDERSTANDING FROM ITS FRIENDS IN US. CHILE HAD EVICTED A MARXIST GOVERNMENT AND WAS FIGHTING COMMUNISM, AND FOR THAT REASON IT HAD
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ACCUMULATED MANY ENEMIES OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY. THERE WERE ADVERSARIES INSIDE AS WELL, NAMELY THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS

(FIRST TIME WE HAVE KNOWN PRESIDENT TO REFER TO CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS IN THESE TERMS).

4. CHILE SUPPORTED USG IN ITS GENERAL POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES, PINOCHET CONTINUED, BUT UNFORTUNATELY THE CONVERSE WAS NOT TRUE. MILITARY AID HAD BEEN PRACTICALLY SUSPENDED, AND ECONOMIC AID WAS IN JEOPARDY. PRESIDENT HOPED WALKER WOULD GO BACK TO US BEARING IN MIND CHILE'S DIFFICULTIES. "DON'T STIFLE US," PRESIDENT CONCLUDED.

5. COMMANDER WALKER INDICATED GENERAL SYMPATHY WITH CHILE'S DIFFICULTIES. SAID HE WOULD BE SEEING PRESIDENT FORD JANUARY 19 OR 20 AND HOPED TO CONVEY HIS VIEWS TO PRESIDENT AT THAT TIME.

6. DURING LUNCHEON, DISCUSSION TURNED AT ONE POINT TO PANAMA CANAL ISSUE. WALKER INDICATED THAT VFW HAD HITHERTO OPPOSED NEGOTIATION OF ANY NEW TREATY. AS RESULT OF HIS ON-THE-SPOT CONSIDERATION OF PROBLEM OF DEFENDING CANAL, HE HAD CONCLUDED SOME TYPE OF AGREEMENT WAS NECESSARY. HE SAID HE WOULD ATTEMPT TO INFLUENCE VFW ACCORDINGLY.
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